IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which is a neutralized salt and is obtained by polymerizing at least one monomer component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components,

wherein said acrylic acid and/or its salt is produced by a process comprising the steps of

(i) obtaining acrylic acid by catalytic gas-phase oxidation of propylene and/or propane, where the obtained acrylic acid contains impurities and/or byproducts and includes protoanemonin as an impurity or byproduct,

(ii) reducing a protoanemonin content of said acrylic acid to not more than 10 ppm, and then

(iii) subjecting at least 50 mol% of said acrylic acid and/or its salt obtained in step (ii) to an alkali treatment, where the mixture of said acrylic acid and/or its salt and said alkali is a solution containing 0.5 to 20 ppm of oxygen.

17. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the acrylic acid has a furfural content of not more than 10 ppm.

18. (Previously presented) A process according to according to claim 16, wherein the alkali treatment is a strong-alkali treatment with an excess of an alkali metal hydroxide.

19. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 16, wherein the polymerization is aqueous solution polymerization.

5 20. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 16, which further comprises the step of crosslinking the vicinity of the surface of the water-absorbent resin.

6 21. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 16, further comprising distilling the acrylic acid in the presence of an aldehyde-treating agent to purify the acrylic acid.

7 22. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 21, wherein the aldehyde-treating agent is a hydrazine compound.

Claims 23-25 (Canceled)

8 26. (Previously presented) A process for producing a water-absorbent resin, which is a neutralized salt and is obtained by polymerizing at least one monomer component including acrylic acid and/or its salt as major components,

wherein said acrylic acid and/or its salt has a protoanemonin content of not more than 10 ppm and is produced by a process comprising the steps of

(i) obtaining acrylic acid by catalytic gas-phase oxidation of propylene and/or propane, where the obtained acrylic acid contains impurities and/or byproducts and contains not less than 10 ppm of an aldehyde as an impurity or a byproduct, and then

(ii) subjecting said acrylic acid and/or its salt to a strong alkali treatment with an alkali metal hydroxide, where the mixture of acrylic acid and/or its salt and alkali is a solution containing 0.5 to 20 ppm of oxygen, thus reducing an aldehyde content in said acrylic acid and/or its salt to not more than 10 ppm.

9 27. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 26, wherein the strong-alkali treatment is carried out at a temperature of not lower than 40°C.

10 28. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 26, wherein the strong-alkali treatment comprises treating the raw acrylic acid with a molar excess of said strong alkali.

11 29. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 26, further comprising the step of purifying the acrylic acid to reduce the protoanemonin content to not more than 10 ppm followed by the strong alkali treatment.

Claims 30-44 (Canceled)

12 45. (New) A process according to claim 16, wherein said water-absorbent resin has a water absorption capacity of not less than 25 g/g under a load of about 1.96 kPa.

13 46. (New) A process according to claim 26, wherein said water-absorbent resin has a water absorption capacity of not less than 25 g/g under a load of about 1.96 kPa.

14 47. (New) A process according to claim 16, wherein said water-absorbent resin has a liquid permeation quantity of not less than 100 g/g under a load of 0.3 psi over 10 minutes.

15 48. (New) A process according to claim 26, wherein said water-absorbent resin has a liquid permeation quantity of not less than 100 g/g under a load of 0.3 psi over 10 minutes.